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An American worker in a
Moscow factory

Moscow

1933

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AN AMERICAN WORKER IN A MOSCOW FACTORY

By S. WEINBERG

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CO-OPERATIVE PUBLISHING SOCIETY
OF FOREIGN WORKERS IN THE U.S.S.R.
MOSCOW-LENINGRAD 1933

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UNEMPLOYED IN NEW YORK

The foreman came over to me and said that I was temporarily laid off.

It was just 5:30 p.m. and the bell rang. I gathered my tools and packed them in my box. Then I went to see Mr. Dienstman, the owner of the Dial Watch Case Company.

He explained that he was forced by the depression to cut down expenses but hoped in a short time to send for me again. While I was still in his office, he told the same story to the other workers who by this time had crowded around him.

I looked at these fellow workers and they looked at me, each of us troubled by the same thought—*unemployment*.

The menace under capitalism had reached out and scooped another handful for the army of the unemployed.

Until now the highly skilled and specially privileged workers among us had not felt the struggle for existence. We'd thought we could easily get another job. However, when I went to ask for work at the Sagamor Metal Goods Corporation, where I had previously earned sixty-five dollars a week, the manager told me that he no longer paid high wages; but if I'd work for thirty dollars a week until times were better he could give me a steady job.

Just so... a cut in wages of sixty per cent to begin with!

Well, I would not submit to that. My rent alone was forty-seven dollars a month. Would the landlord take less? And what about my workmates? They had worked with me and knew I was getting sixty-five a week. Should I go back beside them for less than they were being paid? That would only mean that presently they would be cut down to my level.

They knew I was a union man and that I had been trying to organize them in our union. To let them down was out of the question. So I told Manager Morrison it wasn't enough money and left him. He called me back to say that when I *really* needed a job I could apply to him.

Next day I went to the Twenty-first Street Branch of the Unemployed Workers' Council, registered, paid 5 cents initiation fee and spoke to the workers present about Morrison's attempted sixty per cent wage-cut. There I also listened to a discussion on the gigantic plan to industrialize the Soviet Union and the best way of fighting the slander campaign launched by enemies of the first Workers' Republic, particularly the lies of the notorious Fish Committee. It so happened that some of the workers present were bound for Russia to give their skill to the great work on the Five-Year Plan. The idea of helping on the spot sounded good to me. I had sufficient dollars saved to pay for the journey. Possibly I could get a job there? Anyway, I decided to try it.

Gathering all the information as to what was necessary for the trip, I packed up my tools and clothes. Tools are very important. Every American tool and die-maker has a set of tools. My set was exceptionally good and consisted of a large variety of the best American

and German makes. They have proved to be of very great value ever since. Here in the Soviet Union, the worker is not compelled to provide his own tools. But if he happens to possess them he'll find them a constant boon.

DEPRESSION IN CAPITALIST CITIES

Three months after losing my job I left New York harbour on the Aquitania and, seven days later, landed in Southampton where I got on the train for London.

My first impression of England was that the workers have a low standard of living and dress poorly. Their houses are small and dingy. From the train you can see the stagnation of the land, the empty freight cars standing idle on the side tracks. Everywhere some evidence of unemployment was visible.

In London some fellow passengers and I got acquainted with a couple of unemployed workers who guided us through the city. We passed by the poison gas factory on the Thames. Our guides explained that twenty-eight workers now operate the whole plant which was previously run by one hundred and fifty men, of whom many suffered from the poisonous fumes which escaped in the process of refining. The plant is being run with labour saving devices, automatic machines and conveyors.

We went to Fulham, one of London's working-class quarters, where we saw a family of four evicted from their home for non-payment of rent. The doors and windows were nailed up with corrugated steel sheets so that the "furniture" should not be put back into the house.

Then we visited a worker's family which was to be

evicted the next day. The husband was ill and in the hospital, and the woman had no money to pay the rent—not even to buy a meal. On the pantry shelf lay a quarter of a loaf of bread and a little marmalade in a small jar. This was the day's provision for the woman and her six-year-old daughter.

Then we visited a labour exchange where we saw thousands of unemployed workers lined up for registration, thousands of skilled workers flung out on the scrap heap because there's not enough business for the bosses to make a profit out of them.

I was asked to report on the American unemployed movement. When the chairman of the out-door meeting announced that an American would speak about the jobless in America, the workers all came over in an eager crowd to listen to what was going on in the land of "prosperity." The workers of England evidently take a keen interest in the American labour movement. How much they have in common with us was shown by the many questions they asked.

The journey to Hull for the continental boat to Germany duplicated the picture of England's stagnation. Empty freight cars on all tracks. Smokeless factory chimneys. The weather was miserable and you could see the workers did not have clothes for the time of year. Yet England manufactures the best woollens!

Berlin is plain hell for the workers. The scourge of unemployment has left its mark on the population. The few marks the lucky ones get in relief is a mockery. Women are driven by want to sell their bodies. There is hardly a street in Berlin where young women don't pester you, begging only for the price of a meal. At the railroad station it is almost impossible to get through them. In Berlin's working class districts the women are in despair.

The journey across Europe from Berlin was instructive and significant. Over the German border there is a marked change. The country looks deadlier and more untidy. You feel at once that you're in a backward region, in Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, which formerly belonged to tsarist Russia. Here the workers are shabby and unkempt and make a drastic contrast with the well-fed militarized frontier and customs officials in their gorgeous peacock trappings. The railway stations are populous with sightseers, sombre peasants watching the trains go through, dull and dispirited peasants with nowhere to go themselves and, the casual passer-by would think, with no hope of ever going or getting anywhere.

OVER THE SOVIET BORDER

From Riga the excitement grew until we crossed the Soviet border and arrived in Pskov. Frankly, I had begun to feel nervous. We were told that the Soviet officials were very strict, that they confiscated everything except a few necessities. This worried me. What about my tools? They had cost me six hundred dollars. And here I was travelling as a "tourist." Of course they'd wonder why I wanted all these tools. The fellow in front of me was a New York fur buyer. He'd bought a shopful of silk underwear for his lady friends. The customs officials spread them out and separated the articles, letting him keep the men's things and politely, but firmly, informing him that the others would be kept until he came back. I lined up behind him feeling pretty blue. "This is where I lose my tools," I thought. The next moment I was up in the skies. The official smiled, smacked me on the back and said I was a

good boy for bringing the tools, which would be very useful. At that time there were hundreds of jobs ready and waiting. At the present time, of course, it is not so easy for a foreign worker to enter the Soviet Union on the off chance of getting a job.

After I registered my foreign currency, the husky fellow, who had helped me with my baggage in going through the customs, helped me back again into the train and presented a bill for his services. It was only for fifty kopeks! I was surprised. At other stations, like Riga, when I gave the porter half a dollar he swore at me in Latvian for being so mean.

The atmosphere in the Soviet Union is distinctly and dramatically different from anywhere else in the world. Everywhere here there is inspiring hustle and bustle. Even the smallest railroad stations are busy. The tracks are crowded with trainloads of building material, lumber, bricks, granite, sand, cement, lime, gravel. Freight cars with large crated machines of foreign make. Huge electric transformers. Pipes, angle iron, steel beams. Railroad track equipment such as steel rails, switches and so forth on every hand, apparently to build a new double track. Everywhere evidence of expansion, growth, work and hurrying people with bundles and luggage going to different places.

Workers along the railroad were mostly women, busily engaged in clearing the snow away, making room for more equipment. Many of these woman were dressed in heavy leather coats and all wore special arctic felt boots. They were bundled up well enough to withstand any cold weather, and were all plump and husky and well-fed and very different from the usual kind of labourers in America who do this sort of job, the Italians, Mexicans and Negroes—the cheapest labour that can be got in America. These big girls and

women looked the picture of health, all red cheeked and smiling and waving their hands until the train was gone.

This was another sign of the welcome which foreign workers receive when they travel on Soviet soil. Some contrast to the stony gloom and cold indifference you meet with in the capitalist countries outside.

The closer we approached to Leningrad the more activity we saw. Bright new factories just newly built. Many unfinished buildings waiting for material and warmer weather. New villages and workers' homes in course of construction everywhere.

Leningrad station was crowded with people awaiting our train and journeying to other localities.

The Intourist autobus conveyed us and our luggage to the Hotel October, where we met more tourists from America, England and Germany. After my first hearty meal in the Soviet Union, I got acquainted with a Soviet citizen who spoke English. I had been told everywhere across the border that people in the Soviet Union were starving. I asked him if that were true. His reply came with a good natured smile: "There is work for everybody and food for everyone. We have some shortages in certain fancy food-stuffs, but everybody gets his share. No one can starve in the Soviet Union if he is able to work and wants to."

I plied him with a hundred questions and said I hoped I wasn't boring him with asking too much. To which he retorted:

"You will answer your questions yourself by seeing with your own eyes what goes on and how we live."

The Intourist guide interrupted us for a visit to a neighbouring kino. The picture was good. It showed the October Revolution, after the style of John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook the World*. It was a reminder

that this country did not come so easily into the hands of the Soviets. The whole working class had to fight hard and long and heroically to take over the reins of government.

Next day I went to see historical places like Smolny, still with the kino picture in my mind. Leningrad is a beautiful city, a symbol of the Bolsheviks' success. It was worth the heroic effort and self-sacrifice to win back for the workers all this which their own skilled hands had originally built. And what the workers have done and are doing, since they captured it, can be seen in all the fine new buildings and industries which they have put up. I looked about me elated. My class had made this city and won it! It was a grand prize.

LIFE AND WORK IN LENINGRAD

We visited a textile mill where they make thread, woven cords and tape. Intourist obtained a pass for our group from the factory committee and we were admitted to where the workers were twisting and winding the yarn and thread. They looked a very happy lot of workers and some of them could even speak English. I asked a very young worker at what age they could begin to work in this factory. The answer was, eighteen years or over. And they only work seven hours a day. Students of the factory schools begin to do practical work in the factory from the age of fifteen. When the bell rang and the workers went for dinner we decided that we would also eat with them. We went into their spacious dining room and had soup, meat balls and potatoes and a glass of jelly for 35 kopeks. Nearly half a pound of bread was served to each worker.

It was a good wholesome meal. No one could complain that it was not enough.

Back in America people had told me the Russians would only let one see what they wanted, that they'd show one only the high spots. So, when our guide next asked where we'd like to go, I said I wanted to get lost, to have a chance to really see things on my own. He smiled and I went off alone. I wandered everywhere, into stores and places, without anybody stopping me or questioning me. I kept on walking until I was really tired.

Knowing no Russian was not a particular drawback because I found the people very kind and willing to help a foreigner. When I'd had about enough of it I took a trolley car and showed my tourist card to the conductor who put me off at the right place. I got back in time for supper safe and sound, without the loss of a nickel or a kopek. I mention this because I'd been warned that the Russians are terrible thieves. I met no pickpockets and have never lost anything the whole two and a half years I've been in the Soviet Union, nor any of my tools. I have many of these small valuable instruments which I lend out freely and which could very easily be lost or stolen.

One thing I particularly noticed in my rambles though Leningrad was the well nourished appearance of the people. It was so obvious that you couldn't get away from it. The girls and women especially were so plump and so full of energy. And I say that the people here are healthier and stronger than in America, stronger than in any other country in the world. While I was in Leningrad it was very cold—really cold, I can tell you. But everybody was clothed to stand the bitter frost and wind. I'm not talking about the style of their clothes, of course. That was poor by my idea, mostly

peasant clothes; but they were heavy garments, fur-lined and warm—different from what I saw in the other countries I came through.

Before we left Leningrad we went to the Printers Club where they were having a celebration to mark their going on to a seven-hour day. We told them that in America the printers work nine and a half hours. The Soviet Union is the only country in the world where the workers' hours are being shortened. Already, in some industries they only work six hours, in coal mines for example, and in industries, where the work and processes are dangerous to the workers' health.

While I was resting from my ramble after supper I began to think back to London, Paris, Berlin, where hundreds of prostitutes would stop you on the street. But here in Leningrad, although I looked about for this characteristic of all large capitalist towns, I saw not one. They told me in America that Soviet women were nationalized! This question answered itself. The few days I'd been here I'd seen the women really doing men's work and getting paid the same wages. Women followed the same activities as men and worked side by side with them. They ran trolley cars, cleaned streets and railroad tracks, managed stores and factories, and led the shock brigades in setting the speed and quality of work.

I realized that the opportunities for the women workers were as unlimited here as for the men. They were economically free, standing on their own feet. Prostitution for them was a relic of the barbarous past.

I saw that what the revolution had done for woman, no political or economic reform has done or could do anywhere in the world. There is much to say on this subject, to demonstrate how the lot of the Soviet women has improved and is improving each day. But

I must pass on. I am satisfied that the women in the Workers' Republic are happy, freed of the slavery and sex exploitation under which their American and British sisters suffer.

MOSCOW BOUND

The Moscow train was very crowded. It looked to me as if everybody were going to Moscow. And I suppose nearly everybody that can, does. The journey was very interesting. Many people spoke English or German. One, a Red Army man, told me a lot about the Five-Year Plan and pointed out to me the many fine new factories outside Leningrad—textile, tanning, instrument-making—all equipped with American machinery.

Moscow's a wonderful city. But Moscow's crowds hit you first. There's nothing like Moscow's crowds, the busy throng that always fills the streets, and surely no stations in the world are so crowded as the Moscow stations with people waiting to travel.

March 1st. was still winter in Moscow. At the hotel the tourists were treated like private guests. The hotel help would take a cigarette but no tips. In the hotel hairdressers' a girl barber shaved me so nicely that I presented her with a ruble note. She immediately returned it with an apology and words which meant that I offended her by offering a tip. I felt very embarrassed, having to take that ruble back. There are still some workers in hotels and public restaurants who accept tips but tipping as a practice and the servility which goes with it has in general disappeared.

For the next five days I stuck to the guide and gave Moscow the once over. The snow was cleared off the streets and only the boulevards showed that heavy falls

of it had recently blanketed the city. The second day some of the tourists went job hunting and returned at meal time with so many offers and such a wide choice that what faint uncertainty there may have been lurking at the back of my mind completely left me.

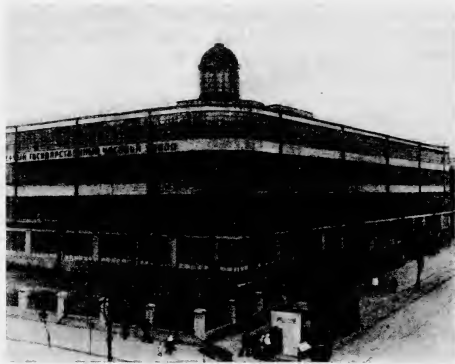
I had no trouble whatsoever about a job. The foreign bureau referred me to the Precision Mechanical Trust, as it was then called. It is now known as the Watch Trust (*Chassavoy Trest*). It owns two splendid factories, a fine research laboratory and technical schools fully equipped for training the workers. The Trust's employment director, who spoke German very well, telephoned to the First State Watch Factory and, all in a few minutes, arranged for me to work in that factory's watch case department.

I went up to see the factory there and then to find out precisely what work I was to do. I discovered that the factory was the former Dueber Hamden Watch Company of Canton, Ohio, the machinery of which had been transported in its entirety to the Soviet Union and re-housed in a big splendid new factory built for the purpose.

I interviewed the director who spoke English with a slight accent. We spoke very freely and frankly, as if we had known each other for years. He offered me a contract at five hundred rubles a month and a room. That was good pay and I felt that I stood on velvet. But I didn't take the room, being unaware of the scarcity of accommodation in this fast growing city. There I made a mistake which caused me some trouble afterwards. However, it was decided that I would start work the next day, March 6, 1931.

It was a bitterly cold morning. My tool box, packed with only the necessary instruments to begin work, weighed about 120 lbs. With the factory's address

written on a piece of paper, I approached a militiaman and dumb-motioned him as to which trolley car I must take. He had seen that my tool-box was heavy to carry and, taking hold of it, helped me along to the right car-stop, which was about one long block away. That was a real friendly service, and meant a good deal of trouble to him. I was very grateful and thanked him as well



This daylight building is part of the 1st State Watch Factory, of Moscow. Over 1200 workers are employed in this Factory.

as I could. It changed my mind about policemen. My instinctive animosity against policemen has completely disappeared here. Of course, the Soviet militiamen are not policemen in the capitalist sense. The Soviet cops are the workers' friends. Their job is to assist people while they safeguard and carry out the laws. They are

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fine, class-conscious human beings in a workers' state that is building socialism.

The trolley car stopped right in front of the factory gate which made it easier for me to carry my tools in and up to the department where I was to work.

Here, let me interrupt my story to give a very brief outline of the Soviet watchmaking industry. This information will add to the interest of the story and help the reader to get the right perspectives, to visualize better what we have to do in this industry which we are building up from the very bottom.

THE SOVIET WATCH INDUSTRY

There were no watches made in pre-war Russia. Only the bourgeois and middle classes were the possessors of pocket watches. Most of the Russian population never owned a watch. Many never learned to tell the time. Some had never even seen a watch in their lives. What watches there were in the country were mainly old style makes from Switzerland, France and Germany. During the World War wrist watches were imported by the Russian war promoters for the exclusive use of army officers. Otherwise, modern style watches did not exist.

In 1917, with the October Revolution, the proletariat inherited only a negligible amount of watches. Imports, also, were stopped altogether.

It was only during the period of the New Economic Policy that watches again made their appearance in the Soviet Union.

A concession was granted to a clock manufacturer in Moscow. He made a cheap wall clock of the chain

and weight style. The quantity was very small and the quality poor.

In the first Five-Year Plan provision was made for the establishment of two large factories, one to make watches and the other to specialize in clocks. A survey of the watch and clock factories for sale resulted, in 1928-29, in the purchase by Soviet commissions of the Dueber Hamden Watch Company of Canton, Ohio, and of the Ansonia Clock Company of New York. The machines of these factories were then shipped to Moscow where two magnificent, modern, daylight buildings were being erected by the Watch Trust to house them.

The First State Watch Factory is on Voronzovskaya. The Second State Clock Factory was built adjoining the old concession factory (Miemza) on Leningrad Road.

In October, 1930, the First Watch Factory began producing four types of watches—two pocket watches and two wrist watches.

The Plan for 1931 was 70,000 watches, but only half that number were made. The plan for 1932 called for 70,000 watches and it was exceeded by 10 per cent. For 1933, the plan has been raised to 100,000 and all indications show that more than this number will be produced.

The factory employs 1,200 workers and employees who have learned to produce watches of good quality. These watches were ordered by the government for railroad workers and other officials who must do their work on time. So now Soviet workers can become the proud possessors of well made, accurate time-pieces of seven-jewel and fifteen-jewel types.

These watches are made entirely of Soviet metal. Even the jewels which used to be imported are now made in the Soviet Union.. Until recently the watch

springs also were imported. But after persistent experiment we have now succeeded in freeing ourselves of foreign imports.

The Second State Factory manufactures clocks on a mass scale. It specializes in four types. A cheap, peasant chain-and-weight wall clock of which it plans to turn out three million this year; an alarm clock for which its plan figure is 500,000 for 1933; a standard table clock, 50,000 of which it will make in 1933 and an electric wall clock of which it plans to make 10,000 this year. This factory employs over 3,000 workers.

These clocks are also made entirely of Soviet material by Soviet workers. Much has yet to be done to improve the quality of this production, but the workers are learning fast. The end of the second Five-Year Plan will undoubtedly see a great increase not only in output but also in quality. The Soviet watch industry as a whole is only at the beginning of its achievements.

The demand for clocks and watches is infinitely greater than the supply. Therefore, in the second Five-Year Plan provision is made for two additional factories. A commission was set to work locating and buying the plants abroad. Meantime, the watch trust has opened a research laboratory, an institute which is now functioning at high pressure.

This laboratory experiments with all kinds of chronological mechanisms or movements. It has three sectors. One sector experiments with watches. Another experiments with clocks and electric timepieces. The third experiments with other time measuring instruments, such as stop watches, counters, etc. This laboratory employs 150 specially trained workers, and according to mooted plans will presently be enlarged to employ a personnel of 750 highly skilled workers.

The institute has completed some very fine original

electric clocks which have gone through the most severe tests and proved successful. All the designs are made with a view to confining production to Soviet metal and machinery.

Soviet engineers are looking to the automatic machine to do the precision work in the new factories. This will free the workers from eye strain and the very difficult operations which require the highest skill. It will raise production, reduce waste and lower costs.

GETTING ON THE JOB

From the very first minute, I never felt so much at home on any other job I had ever had. I thought to myself: Here's your chance, Sam, to see what you can really do towards the Five-Year Plan. I asked the interpreter to take me over the factory for a look round to meet other Americans.

I was confident that I could improve much of the work in my own department. Westner, the American who was head of the department I had to take charge of, was to finish his contract in about ten days and leave for America. So I had a little time to take over the work and get everything straightened out. But Westner seemed unwilling to help me and he even got the interpreter under his influence. I don't blame the interpreter, of course, because he was used to Westner and I was a new guy.

The only thing was to do the best I could to get a grip of things without him. The young Soviet workers in this department told me that Westner left them all to themselves and never assisted or instructed them properly. As a result the plan of this department was only carried out 30 per cent.

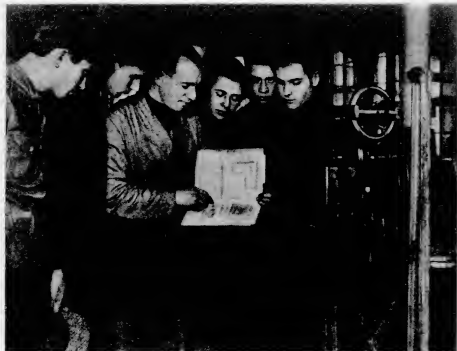
Naturally, I did my best to work with this Westner. I was anxious to find the cause of the trouble. But he retorted snappily to my questions, said the metal was no good, the workers were no good and their work was punk. He sourly misrepresented everything.

After a few days I realized what sort of a fellow he was. I found the workers very willing to do their utmost. Their work was bad, emphatically bad, but that was Westner's fault and because his instructions were not correct. As to the metal, that was good enough and only slightly inferior to the American metal.

However, I summed up the position in my watch case department. It was only doing 30 per cent of its plan. What was wrong? Nobody seemed to know. Anyway, the whole department was being held up for one set of dies. A skilled Russian worker had been busy on this for a month without succeeding in making it to size. Obviously, this was a job that I must do myself. Therefore I set to work on it, in my regular trade as a tool and die maker, working on the bench, a thing the other foreman did not do, which, incidentally, at once gained for me the confidence of my brigade.

ORGANIZING MY BRIGADE

The technical director and the tool room superintendent assigned me to special work and gave me a brigade of one skilled Russian worker and four young lads to do it. I'm proud of these boys, who were between eighteen and twenty years of age and had only recently left the technical school to work at the factory. Lavrenov was a peasant boy who only spoke Russian but was so clever that he could understand



Production meeting of my brigade. Studying the plan for the month of October 1931. (Left to Right) Feldman, Lavrenov, Weinberg, Plesheev, Pinsker, Higerovich, and Stoyanov.

from my sketching and demonstrating what I had to say. Higgerovich, a small boy of eighteen, the son of a musician, had no mechanical ability but was a good listener. At school he had learned German sufficiently to make himself understood and was very useful to me as translator. Volodin, a boy of twenty, a handsome fair boy who was a regular sheik with the girls, was very devoted to his task in working hours and always tried his best. Then there was Zbarsky, a sturdy city boy who could always be depended upon to do the heaviest work. The skilled Russian worker was Shnitserov.

Well, we were given a production plan to carry out, that is, we had to produce new tools and dies to the

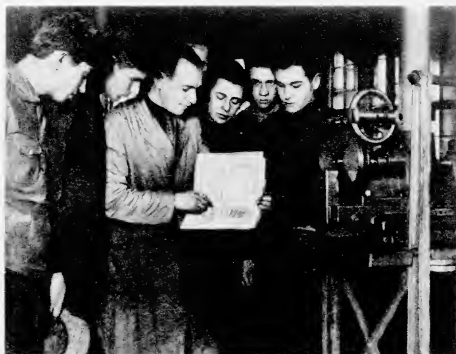
Naturally, I did my best to work with this Westner. I was anxious to find the cause of the trouble. But he retorted snappily to my questions, said the metal was no good, the workers were no good and their work was punk. He sourly misrepresented everything.

After a few days I realized what sort of a fellow he was. I found the workers very willing to do their utmost. Their work was bad, emphatically bad, but that was Westner's fault and because his instructions were not correct. As to the metal, that was good enough and only slightly inferior to the American metal.

However, I summed up the position in my watch case department. It was only doing 30 per cent of its plan. What was wrong? Nobody seemed to know. Anyway, the whole department was being held up for one set of dies. A skilled Russian worker had been busy on this for a month without succeeding in making it to size. Obviously, this was a job that I must do myself. Therefore I set to work on it, in my regular trade as a tool and die maker, working on the bench, a thing the other foreman did not do, which, incidentally, at once gained for me the confidence of my brigade.

ORGANIZING MY BRIGADE

The technical director and the tool room superintendent assigned me to special work and gave me a brigade of one skilled Russian worker and four young lads to do it. I'm proud of these boys, who were between eighteen and twenty years of age and had only recently left the technical school to work at the factory. Lavrenov was a peasant boy who only spoke Russian but was so clever that he could understand



Production meeting of my brigade. Studying the plan for the month of October 1931. (Left to Right) Feldman, Lavrenov, Weinberg, Plesheev, Pinsker, Higgerovich, and Stoyanov.

from my sketching and demonstrating what I had to say. Higgerovich, a small boy of eighteen, the son of a musician, had no mechanical ability but was a good listener. At school he had learned German sufficiently to make himself understood and was very useful to me as translator. Volodin, a boy of twenty, a handsome fair boy who was a regular sheik with the girls, was very devoted to his task in working hours and always tried his best. Then there was Zbarsky, a sturdy city boy who could always be depended upon to do the heaviest work. The skilled Russian worker was Shnitserov.

Well, we were given a production plan to carry out, that is, we had to produce new tools and dies to the

amount of 7,600 rubles in the first month. I began by getting the boys to rough out the work and then touching it up to size myself. I gradually filled them with confidence in themselves by showing them how easy it is to keep to accurate sizes. Of course, I also put the wind up them by showing how the slightest mistake was liable to spoil the whole work.

The training of my brigade was an essential job which had to be done parallel with our efforts to do justice to our production plan. In the technical school these boys got a very good foundation. No question about that. But it was not enough to enable them to do practical tool work, especially of such absolute precision as ours in which we have to work to very close tolerances.

The apprentice must begin to work with extreme exactness, using the finest measuring tools right from the start. This calls for much attention from the instructor or brigade leader. The first lesson was to learn how to use the measuring tools properly, the micrometer, the Vernier caliper, indicators, bevel protractors and so forth.

My experience is that the young Soviet workers are made of the right stuff and are remarkably quick to grasp instructions. They realize that they must make good at whatever task they get. They know there are no unemployed skilled workers to select from and therefore adapt themselves with all willingness and zeal to a given job. My method of training was to get each one to specialize on a given kind of work, giving him chances to practise until he had completely mastered the job.

Only through practising exactly as instructed can they become skilled and do the job well in the shortest

possible time. Correct practice from the beginning is absolutely necessary and must be emphasized.

I kept my eye on them and at every mistaken movement convinced them by showing them the correct way. I insisted that they ask questions where they didn't understand me. I warned them of mistakes which are liable to occur and thereby saved them from being made, keeping spoilage down to a minimum. We rationalized each given job by shortening the technological process, by making extra sets of tools at the same time and mechanizing the hand work. I made rough sketches of each operation to illustrate exactly each step they were to follow. These sketches were kept in my file and later used to make regular drawings. They also helped the boys to understand me and to have confidence in their work. The choice of steel was another thing which contributed to the making of more durable tools. We kept records of the heat treatment for each detail. A systematic check back on all tools was possible through these records, and any necessary duplicates of a tool or die could be made without loss of time.

All of which helped my brigade to compete with other brigades and to improve on its own previous work.

So we tackled our production plan and, considering everything, I was not displeased with our progress, although only 65 per cent of the work assigned to us had been done in that first month. I called my boys together and appealed to them in a comradely way. I showed them all our spoiled work which I had carefully collected during the month and kept locked in my drawer. Each one recognized his own work. I asked them to explain each job, why and how it was spoiled, and checked up to see if they told the truth.

None of the boys was afraid to tell the truth even if it went against him. I made them feel sorry for that first month's work. However, we all agreed that the second month must show a very considerable improvement. That was not all. We added 35 per cent of the unfinished work to our second month's production plan, and I'm proud to say, carried it through. But, you can be sure, we had to take the bull by the horns to do it.

My boys were nice fellows, normally serious-minded and willing. They had a great regard for my skill and wanted to know what role I intended to play in socialist construction.

We discussed many political events after working hours. They wanted to know about the American youth and the working conditions in America. I gave them some addresses of young American workers and they corresponded to get first hand information. Little Higgerovich was the most active of them. He was also my translator when it was necessary and always understood me perfectly. At first, when I began work in this factory, I was given an interpreter who spoke English fluently. But he was too eager to use better language than he was talked to and we made some intolerable blunders. So I used Higgerovich instead and we got along quite well.

By putting in every effort we finished the April plan 100 per cent, including the 35 per cent which was left over from the month of March, thus we were ready for May 1, which is the greatest of all international holidays.

We had two days yet to prepare for the May production plan which we had received a few days in advance. After two months of training, my boys could be depended on for some real work. Therefore we con-

sidered the norm of production set for our brigade both too small and at too high a cost. So we drew up a counter-plan and agreed to carry it out. Our plan was to cost the factory 2,000 rubles less.

I BECOME AN UDARNIK

At a general production meeting of the factory I was recommended as an udarnik by my department trade union committee. This needs some explanation. Production meetings, as they are called, are a phase of work peculiar to the Soviet Union. Every factory and workshop, every business institution, holds these meetings at various intervals, once a month and even more frequently, to discuss the problems of the work, the problems of production. These meetings are attended by the workers and the administration. The various questions affecting the work, its quality and quantity, labour discipline, the shortcomings of the administration or of the workers, are threshed out with a thoroughness and frankness that is only possible in a Soviet country where the workers are their own masters.

Udarniks (pronounced "oodarnik") are also a feature peculiar to this workers' republic. The word is coined from a Russian word which means "a shock." And I can tell you, these Soviet udarniks or shock-workers are the most vigorous and enthusiastic workers in the world. They are the best and most conscientious workers in a factory. They set the pace for the other workers in output, at the same time taking care of the quality and trying to improve it. They form themselves into shock brigades and challenge each other to socialist competition, departments challenging

departments, factories challenging factories and even industries challenging industries. The shock brigade movement is spread throughout the Soviet Union and on such a scale the results are colossal. It is mainly owing to the efforts of the shock workers that the great Five-Year Plan was finished in four years instead of five.

I was surprised and flattered to be made an udarnik because I hadn't been thinking of it. I came here to do my best and help all I could. I found my department behind and doing bad work. I wanted to get all that put right and to make it something to be proud of. I did my utmost with my boys and, of course, worked hard, but only as a worker interested in his work



At home drawing a design for an attachment for milling radii on a plain milling machine.

should. Anyway, as recognition, I was presented with an udarnik's book which gave me certain privileges. For instance, I could buy a suit of clothes, an extra pair of shoes or anything I needed at the price of the material and labour. Besides that, there was the honour the workers bestow on udarniks, the high esteem in which my department, the factory and especially my boys, held me.

It was nearly the end of April when I asked for a ticket to see the May 1 demonstration on the Red Square. I realize now that my request was a big order at such a late moment. There are so many foreign delegations bringing greetings to the Soviet Union from the workers of their respective countries and so many delegates from the factories to accommodate, that tickets are scarce. But the chairman of our factory committee was successful and I was one of the lucky two thousand on the tribune in the Red Square by Lenin's majestic mausoleum.

Needless to say, on May 1, I was up, past the militia cordons and in my place early.

At a quarter to nine by the Kremlin clock, Stalin came walking up slowly to the reviewing point at the foot of Lenin's tomb where the most prominent members of the Communist Party and the Soviet government were standing. He is a fine, big, fearless-looking man with a good-natured smile. I was standing only a few paces from him.

At nine o'clock the Kremlin chimes opened the celebration. The chief of the Red Army, Voroshilov, the one-time mechanic of Lugansk, reviewed the massed forces on the square. What a fine sight, this first line of defence of the Soviet Union and of socialism! It gave you such a feeling of the workers' strength. Then came the workers themselves, a marvellous parade of red and

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gold banners, armed factory workers, endless streams of them pouring through the square with their bands; cheering, dancing, singing. Clouds of aeroplanes above. Every factory was represented with numbers of banners and slogans and with bannerets which set forth the percentage to which it had fulfilled its plan. It was the most remarkable day of my life. I never saw a mass of workers so happy, so enthusiastic, so strong and healthy. Men, women, girls, boys, children, sometimes even babies were in the line of march.

One feature of the great procession was the stage setting erected on large trucks and the performances which were given from them by artists of the Moscow theatres whenever the procession halted.

Occasionally I watched Stalin. He was there the entire day from 8.45 to 6 p. m. when the giant demonstration finished. I estimated it at two million strong!

There are two days to this workers' holiday. I could hardly find the patience to wait till May 3 to get back to work again to tell my boys about the great impression the May Day celebration had made on me.

A PRODUCTION MEETING WITH MY BRIGADE

The boys greeted me with gusto and shook my hand in welcome when I went in to work. At noon, after lunch, I called a meeting of my brigade and put it up to them that we must now carry out our new counter-plan with redoubled energy. They agreed with me and were very pleased when I told them I proposed to adopt more advanced methods of instruction. The following were the main suggestions we worked out together:

- 1) Practical demonstration on the job.

2) Each worker to fulfil his task. Small or great it must not be left unfinished.

3) Increase our discipline and charge each young worker with more and more responsibility.

4) To specialize the work, giving jobs with similar operations to one young worker.

5) Encourage the rationalization of each operation.

6) Sketch in freehand every detail and explain the technological process until the young worker understands it perfectly.

7) Encourage independent thinking and suggestions. Encourage questions.

8) Not to give instructions mechanically but to make them sound like friendly advice.

9) After working hours to discuss mistakes and spoiled work with as many as possible; to invite workers from others brigade to such discussions.

10) To drop down hard on any repetition of mistakes.

I might add that illustrations from modern technical journals did much to clarify things for my boys and helped them to visualize technical movements.

By the successful carrying out of our May program my boys gained so much confidence in themselves that nothing seemed impossible to them any more.

WE HIT A "BREAK"

By this time my brigade had a reputation and was often called upon to help out the other brigades in our department. My boys would respond like true *udarniks*. Things went swimmingly with us until the superintendent took a notion to shift us to another corner of the toolroom because, he said, he needed the space

for special benchwork. This had a paralysing effect on my boys who had got used to working in the old place, where the light was good. We wanted plenty of light for our kind of work. All my arguing was useless. My complaint to the director was also in vain. So I had the job to reorganize again. The boys grumbled; it was like starting them in a different factory. To me it didn't matter so much. We lost a lot of time and took about two weeks to get going again properly. I tried to adjust myself to the new corner and encouraged the boys to do the same, but our production fell to 60 and 68 per cent of our plan for June and July. In August we did better but we didn't touch 100 per cent again until September. It was a bad and useless bit of interference. The boys, being so eager and trying to do their best, felt it.

TRAINING NEW CADRES

For some time I had been asking for additional workers for our brigade. In September I got three more from the technical school. One of these boys was a very good organizer among the youth. I often discussed with him ways to improve our training of new cadres. Finally, we organized a technical class in the toolroom, beginning with about twenty students. Every other day, after working hours, we spent an hour in practical demonstrations on the machines.

Then I got Mr. R. P. Valtier of the Elevator Works to come along after working hours and give us a course in theory and shop mathematics. I conducted the class in practice. For instance, he took thread cutting in theory and I followed by setting each boy of our class to try it out on the lathe under my instructions.

Mr. Valtier also worked out a number of mathematical charts which simplified calculations and enabled the student, once having grasped the principle, to go ahead.

Many of our students, it should be remembered, didn't come from an industrial environment and had to be instructed very carefully in every detail of each



Meeting of my technical class in the Red corner of our Department.

operation. Not all of them graduated from technical schools, the majority of them getting their first technical experience in our factory. Watch making is more difficult in many respects than automobile making the degree of precision being infinitely more exacting. We don't allow a variation of one quarter of a fine gauge degree on our parts. A gauge degree is one two-

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thousand-five-hundredth part of an inch! All the stress is on exactitude, every part must be measured. This work calls for years of skill. A watch consists of 159 parts, but involves 2,000 distinct operations. In the jewel and motion department alone 157 operations are made on the 17 parts handled there. And every operation must be precise.

But our class was getting on fine. I also got another American specialist, Mr. Handler, who could speak Russian, to come along. The boys were so enthusiastic that they missed theatre nights to be with the class. For the same reason they were sometimes absent from meetings of the Young Communist League.

This caused trouble. The secretary of the Communist Party nucleus of our factory stepped in. He gave a written reprimand to each of them for not attending the Komsomol (Y. C. L.) meetings. I went to the comrade and asked him to release the members of our technical class when meetings coincided with class nights. There is a rule in the Communist Party to the effect that when a young worker studies in Rabfac, (the workers' university) he may be released from Party meetings. And I was trying to get the same ruling for our technical class. But I did not succeed and as a result the class broke up.

This episode makes a story in itself. It is instructive in that it shows the kind of obstacles likely to crop up which you are in duty bound to fight. This secretary was stubborn and said that Party meetings were more important than the class. He was right. But he should have been a little more elastic and sympathetic. The Communist Party rule is that technical classes must not be discouraged. However, we had to fight him. Two of my boys were members of the Komsomol Bureau. They took up the matter and Party members

brought it up in the Party bureau, one of them being a member of the District Party Committee. The chairman of the trade union committee, also a Party member, shared my view. In the end the secretary was removed for neglecting his duty and in some instances violating the general rules of the Communist Party. This was apart from the question of my technical class which was only an incident in his conduct. But while this was happening a good time elapsed and our students got out of the habit of coming to class, besides being discouraged by the secretary's attitude.

Unhappily, although the higher Party officials of the district upheld my appeal, and notwithstanding that the new secretary was a very active, capable and helpful comrade, I could not get together enough young workers to continue the class. Since, I have been extremely busy. Now I feel that I should have continued the class and chanced its growing. However, I hope to organize a new technical class very soon. It should be better than ever with the experience we've had. The chief difficulty is that there is so much absorbing work to be done at my job that I haven't yet managed to find the time.

WE WIN THE RED BANNER

In November 1931 we captured the Red Banner of the tool department.

This was an exciting event. We swore then to keep that banner and we've got it still. At the time my boys said:

"We've got this banner and mean to keep it. No other brigade shall ever win it from us."

"We're constructing socialism," Higgerovich chipped in; "that's why we've won it."

This putting up of banners to be won makes the atmosphere of a factory electric. There is a small banner for each department which the brigades in the department try to win. We have eight brigades in the tool department. Then there is a larger banner for the different departments of the whole factory to win from each other.

At the meeting held for the purpose of taking over our trophy I accepted the honours and announced that the new foreman of our brigade, the new brigadier, was to be the peasant boy, Lavrenov, who had gained more skill and administrative ability than any of the other boys. He took over the banner and promised to guard it well by his example and leadership. I should make it plain that I, also, was to work under the new foreman and take orders from him. This was to encourage and strengthen him. As a foreman he made good. After two months of it he had sufficient confidence in himself to use the knowledge he had acquired to instruct the other boys.

Little Higgerovich also stuck to his job from the beginning. Now he is a skilled toolmaker and certainly the best worker under Foreman Lavrenov. The rest of the boys reach a very good average and are a great help. That we've got the banner and have kept it all this time is sufficient proof of that. My brigade was the first in the toolroom to go over to the cost accounting system. They regularly turn out 100 per cent of their production plan and only have about two per cent spoilage. This is splendid. Besides their good work they are politically advanced. When the government loan for the last year of the Five-Year Plan came along, they were the first in the drive and subscribed to the extent of 120 per cent of their average monthly wages. Altogether I'm proud of and deeply gratified with "my

boys," as I shall always call them. Training them is the best job I've yet done in the Soviet Union.

WHOSE FACTORY IS THIS ?

When the whistle blows at the end of the day in a capitalist factory there's a hustle and bustle to get out into freedom. A few minutes later the shops are deserted save for the foremen, the superintendent and a harassed record clerk. In the Soviet Union things are just the opposite. The factory is the centre of the worker's life, the mainspring of all his activities. There he earns his bread and is gathered up, through the factory organizations, into cultural life. This entails meetings and discussions. The whistle at the end of the shift is usually the signal for a meeting to begin.

The workers in our factory call meetings very often, especially production meetings. The production meetings perform a vital function in keeping the factory abreast of its work and effecting improvement in the quality and quantity of output.

For example, in the summer months when many workers are given vacation or sent to rest homes for a fortnight or a month, the output falls low. A production meeting is thereupon called in which every worker takes part, and ways are discussed to stimulate production without interfering with the vacation privilege. Apart from important suggestions for increasing the productivity of labour, proposals may be made that we volunteer to work on the coming free day. Another worker suggests that we do an hour's overtime each day. These propositions are put to a vote and the majority decide, probably in favour of one day's work on the next free day. This is called a "subbotnik,"

which means "Saturday," Saturday having been the usual day for such voluntary work, before the change to the five-day week.

Again, when there is, say, a large percentage of spoiled work or some other difficulties in production are encountered, the Party organization, the trade union, and the director of the factory call the workers together for a consultation. Many good ideas are exchanged and maybe, some workers are criticized for carelessness. But the usual result is an immediate improvement. Discipline in the factory or department is also discussed and whatever decision is come to is usually carried out. For instance, they will decide that each worker must take better care of his machine or tools, clean them, put them away in good order; they decide against absenteeism or unpunctuality or drunkenness. They are the masters. They take a deep interest in the tools and machines. Most workers stay a little longer after working hours to clean up and set everything in order. In capitalist countries the machine shop workers are not concerned with the machines or tools. But here the workers consider the machines their own. The entire factory is their own. No one who has lived and worked here and seen how the workers' living conditions are directly connected with the factory, can deny this.

Well, just take a look at it and see. There's the factory. It makes watches or shoes or automobiles. Its output increases through the efforts of the workers. It makes profits. Out of these it builds houses, clubs, libraries, hospitals, theatres, schools. It feeds its workers through its kitchens and bakeries. It clothes them through its co-operative stores. It finds the transport for all these things and also the sources of supply. The worker lives for his factory, which looks after him

directly and through the trade union for the whole twenty-four hours, year after year. As the factory grows more prosperous the workers' wages and social benefits increase and his hours of work diminish. So, of course, it is his and her factory. . . and, because of that, he or she wants to make it the best factory in the world.

In this I've also become like the Soviet worker. When I came here first I used to say to my boys: "This is yours. You must guard it. What you do is all for yourselves." Just as if I was only a friendly, helpful onlooker, as, indeed, I was. Now it's different with me, right from the inside and from positive knowledge. At home, or when I meet with friends, we discuss *my* factory and they talk about *their* factory. It is the most interesting subject you can hear anybody talk of.

At present in my factory we work seven hours, from eight till four, which includes one hour for dinner. But I stay on after the whistle habitually. I don't like to quit. I'm busy and interested and I've got an interesting job. I never felt like this in America. When the whistle blew I scampered with the rest. But here, I could go on all night, I'm so occupied and happy . . .

FREEING THE SOVIET UNION FROM IMPORTS

Instructing and doing a day's work were not the only things I was able to do. I wanted to use my capacity to the full, and therefore put forward many suggestions. The most successful one would, I hoped, be a boon to the Soviet watchmaking industry. It was to produce watch hands which, till then, were imported, at 35 gold kopeks apiece.

When I started to work on the first die it immediately aroused the interest of the other skilled workers in our

toolroom. They also began on watch hand dies. I went into socialist competition with them. I tried to organize them so that we didn't duplicate the work. I spoke to them, showed them my sketches and offered all the help I could possibly give. Finally, we agreed to work on different sizes and various shapes.

One worker, Nikolayev, undertook to make the smallest in size. He said to me: "Even if I lose my eyesight I must carry out this job." He was very determined and enthusiastic. It would be an achievement in the endeavour to turn out a complete Soviet watch of Soviet metal.

I was not used to having so many rest days (four days work and one day of rest), and to working only seven hours a day. Therefore, every other day I used to work an hour overtime on my watch-hand die. I decided that I must get it made in my own time and I often went in on my day off to make better headway with it.

One day, when I had already done about thirty hours of work in all on my die, Kutnitzov, the superintendent of the toolroom, came across to me and asked me what I was doing. I showed him and told him what it was going to be.

He immediately ordered me to discontinue making it. At first, I was not inclined to pay any attention to him. It was a free day and I'd come in especially to do this work. The toolroom only happened to be open because it was so far behind that some of the workers had also come in to try and finish their plan for the month. But Kutnitzov went off and wrote me a sharp note forbidding me to do the work, even in my own time! This he handed to me as a sort of official document which couldn't be disputed. Here is a translation of the note:

"Weinberg,

"I forbid you to do any work without a written order, whether it is in your own working hours or not in your working hours.

May 29, 1931.

Kutnitzov,
Superintendent."

Thereupon I laid the work aside, hoping to appease the jealous fellow. You see, it was a matter of discipline and, although I realized his outrageous interference and was determined to fight him, it would have been a bad example for me, as a leader of my boys, to flout the authority of any shop superior when there was a proper, recognized way of getting him corrected. That's how I reasoned it out, anyway. Possibly, I should have fought him outright from the start: it would have stopped him sooner from hindering the work of the factory and, therefore, of the Five-Year Plan and the building up of socialism.

Nikolayev, who was making the smallest watch-hand die, kept quiet and went on working at it. But Kutnitzov eventually found out and made an attempt to get Nikolayev laid off. But just then he didn't succeed. Nikolayev was a member of the trade union and had been a former Red Army soldier. Kutnitzov's brother-in-law happened to be Nikolayev's foreman and began to provoke him, until one day Nikolayev threatened to hit him. Immediately a factory trial was called. It was a good chance for Kutnitzov to get rid of Nikolayev and he used it successfully. Nikolayev was not only laid off but was also suspended from the trade union for six months.

It turned out that jealous conceit underlay Kutnitzov's action. He had dreamed of making such a hand-die himself and felt that I was stealing his fire. When he heard of my die and saw that I'd really got some-

thing to show, he was very agitated. He suddenly started to make a drawing of a die but kept it dark, showing nobody. But it was a bad drawing. Had he been open about it I could have helped him, as I had helped the others: Such a die was a simple thing to make, easily within the possibility of our factory and with no secret about it. However, apart from the matter of the die, Kutnitzov was incapable. He made many mistakes, interfering with the work of the department by unnecessary "reorganizations," shifting workers about from place to place, shifting machines and then moving them back again to where they were. For example, he moved the engraver from a well lighted place to where the light was bad and then put him back again. Besides this restless sort of foolery, he resisted rationalization proposals and tolerated careless work and spoilage.

During his administration we had eighteen unproductive office workers in the toolroom! It was vital to get him removed. I complained to the technical director of the factory and backed up the other workers who complained. At production meetings I attacked him, exposing his mistakes to the workers and, eventually, he was removed to another department where he had much less responsibility and could do no harm.

Under the new superintendent the work of the whole toolroom immediately showed a marked improvement. Nikolayev, who was a highly skilled worker, was at once reinstated and I resumed work on my die.

Incidentally, I learned about the factory BRIZ and went to them. This is a bureau to look after inventions and suggestions on rationalization. They accepted my suggestions about the die with alacrity and promised every help. The Red Director of the factory gave me an order to go ahead and confine myself to work on

the die. He further instructed the new superintendent to give me all possible assistance. But I was bent on doing it in my own time and worked through the evening shift and on off days, aiming to finish it as a present to the Soviet Union by November 7, the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. This I did, stamping out fifteen thousand hands and fitting a set of watches with the new hands so that now we had an all Soviet watch!

I got a premium, of course. The workers in my department, especially my boys, were so enthusiastic that the factory committee had a large portrait of me made which was placed on Udamnik Street for the thousands to see who passed by in the celebration parade on November 7. But these honours were not expected and were quite unimportant in comparison with my satisfaction in achieving what I had set out to do. I say this in all modesty and frankness, for this is a country without humbug, where the workers are frank with themselves and with everybody else, where nobody has anything to hide or is expected to have any reasons for pretending.

The best part of this story is that the Soviet Union has been freed from imported watch-hands. While we were all busy on our dies the administration already had in its possession an automatic die designed by a Russian engineer. This engineer offered it to them for fifty thousand rubles down, plus a job in the factory at five hundred rubles a month, a distinctly big price considering what a watch hand die amounts to. They were digesting his demands. Then, suddenly, my die turned up. It was not so good as his, but it let them demonstrate that they were not altogether helpless without him. He promptly changed his tune, accepting twenty thousand rubles and a job at two hundred a

month. So, in the end, I was instrumental in saving the factory thirty thousand rubles and a monthly outgoing of three hundred rubles over an indefinite period. Of course, I am proud and glad to have done it.

THE WEAKNESS OF BRIZ

Bureaucracy, red tape, incompetence and square pegs in round holes are met with all over the world. The Soviet Union is not free of bureaucracy, although it is different in origin and character from the bureaucracy which is to be found in capitalist countries. In the latter, bureaucracy necessarily results from the class division in society, from the separation of a governing and administrating class standing above the workers; in the Soviet Union it is a heritage from the past which is being fought against and gradually overcome. In this enormous agricultural country which suffered the curse of tsarism and was kept backward with vicious intent, it would be a miracle if, in its vast efforts to make skilled workmen and trained administrators out of peasantry, it never committed mistakes or met with failure, if it never had a case of bureaucracy, stupidity or incompetence, if it never misplaced square pegs like Kunitzov in round holes. Such cases are the measles of this great new industry, the "infantile sickness" of it as the phrase goes.

So it was with our factory BRIZ. Each factory has a BRIZ department which is supposed to look after the proposals made by the workers for rationalizing the processes of the work and dealing with inventions — anything, in fact, which helps the production of the factory. Our factory BRIZ was organized at about the same time as I started work. But we did



Our brigade was awarded the Red banner of the tool department for overfulfilling the plan without spoilage.

not have an expert with progressive ideas to manage it. Many valuable suggestions were lost forever, as the BRIZ office neglected to keep a copy of them.

Nobody told me that there was an office in our factory which existed solely for the purpose of testing suggestions. So, on my own, I made an attachment for the drill press to mill away the fine burr on the watch case cover and bezel, or bevel, without submitting it as a suggestion. This immediately released two workers who were scraping the burr off by hand. After this the comrade in charge of rationalization came and asked me for more suggestions. I showed him how I was polishing the centre rings for our spinning dies without "diamond dust" and that they were

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just as well done and effective. Not knowing the difference, he asked one of the old Americans, who replied that in America this job was always done with diamond dust. On that ground he did not accept my suggestion. Nevertheless, I never use diamond dust for this job and everybody in our toolroom does as I do for polishing fine dies. It saves a good deal of expense. But our BRIZ...

When our supply of American centre drills ran low I suggested that we should make our own. I sketched out a technological process and showed the foreman how to use the backing off attachment on the Hendey lathe. Instead of doing as I said, they made 200 centre drills cylindrical. Then they told me that the suggestion did not work. I suggested special formulas for hardening special tools but these formulas were not even tried out.

These few instances go to show how a rationalization bureau should not work. Altogether I have made forty-six suggestions. Nearly all of them were accepted but very few were heard of again. The only ones which came to anything were those I could make and effect myself. For these I received premiums amounting to 1,678 rubles. I mention this to show that suggestions are worth something to the factory. The other foreign workers and many of the Soviet workers have also made numbers of valuable suggestions, most of which met with the same fate as mine, being either ignored, neglected or lost.

This was serious and a trial of the people responsible eventually took place in Dom Soyusov, the House of the Trade Unions. I charged the technical director of the factory, the chief of the factory BRIZ and the chairman of the trade union committee in our shop with neglecting my suggestions. The case was investigated by the

trade union lawyer. Thirty suggestions were involved. The decision came to was that all the suggestions must be carried out immediately. Nothing, however, was done.

Then I went to the *Moscow Daily News* which took up the matter vigorously. A commission of twenty-five workers from the factory was formed. This resulted in twenty-nine out of forty suggestions being accepted and ordered to be carried out. But so far, nothing has been done. In a way, this makes these trials look useless. But there is nothing useless or absurd about the matter. The responsible offenders often have perfectly feasible and convincing reasons for their neglect and delays. Most of Soviet industry is new. It is being organized on a large scale. Everybody is busy and certainly administrators, managers, and officials are working much more than a normal working day. Most of them are absorbed in their own immediate jobs, getting first things done first — or what they consider first things. That will explain a good many difficulties with my suggestions. But, the importance of workers' suggestions, and especially those of skilled workers from advanced capitalist countries, is too vital for any of this neglect to be tolerated.

For example, in the plate of our largest watch there are thirty-six holes. I designed a multiple head drill press to do twelve holes at once. As the head is semi-automatic, one operator could work the three drilling machines. This would increase efficiency to 100 per cent. At the present time these holes are drilled separately and keep twelve operators busy, working two shifts on the six machines. If the whole factory went on two shifts instead of one as is now being worked, that would mean four shifts to these six operators, which would be impossible without more machines.

These multiple heads, which would save so much time, labour and money, were rejected because the technical director estimated that it would cost about ten thousand rubles to make them. I ask, what is that against 100 per cent efficiency?

We could similarly increase production by at least twenty-five per cent in other slow operations. All of these matters I am now taking up with the Inventors' Society.

These are the sort of difficulties encountered here and there in Soviet factories through the inexperience and lack of training of people in the factory administration. They are not difficulties which show anything fundamentally wrong. In some ways according to how you look at it—and you must look at these things from a correct angle—they are fundamentally hopeful difficulties, arising from the peculiar, unexampled, sudden establishment and quick growth of large-scale industry in what was the most backward country in Europe. Indeed, if it were not for this fact, these difficulties wouldn't be worth while attempting to overcome. Irritating as some of the obstacles seem at times, there is always underlying this irritation a really deep and inspiring consciousness that everything you do is so very much worth while. That's how it takes me, anyway. I'm determined to fight on to get things done in my factory which I know will benefit the factory and all of us who work in it. I devote myself to victory. I know I shall win. We will all win. We are building socialism and we shall win, learning. Our obstacles are only temporary and, in every phase of life in this great Workers' Republic, are gradually being broken down.

* * *

Another great hindrance to efficiency in most departments is the fluctuation of labour. I know of many instances where workers who had gained a little experience on one job and had just become able to do that particular job properly, were taken off and transferred to different departments. In my own case I have had fourteen workers to train in the course of two years. But only two stayed with me from the beginning. Of course, there's a good reason for this—the shortage of workers with training and the absolute need of them elsewhere. On the other hand, many workers are permitted to leave the factory after they have gained a great amount of experience in our work. Here, again, it was often the shortage. That is the chief reason why it is not possible to have many experienced workers in our factory. However, in this, time fights on our side. The position, of course, is not so bad as it was, especially since Comrade Stalin, in his famous speech on *New Conditions — New Tasks*, laid it down that this sort of thing in our present large-scale conditions cannot be tolerated.

In his directives to the leaders of Soviet industry, and arising from his analysis of this fluidity of labour, Comrade Stalin said, among other things, that the workers could be attached to the factory "by introducing such a system of payment as will give the skilled worker his due . . . we must provide a stimulus to the untrained worker to advance himself."

Over a year ago, when piecework was first assigned to our work in the toolroom, it was denounced and rejected by every worker. Only my brigade took it into consideration that the cost of each tool made must be known. So we decided to be the first to introduce piecework. I specialized my brigade in the American method which is used in all the really large manufac-

during concerns and kept a time study of all our work. The result was that my boys made more than their ordinary rate of pay would give them. They showed an example to the other workers who, since then, have also accepted piecework. And now, not one of them would return to the old monthly rate of pay. This is the main reason for the considerable improvement in the quality and quantity of our work in the toolroom. Instead of the 60 per cent production, which was one result under the monthly pay system, under the piecework system we now keep close to 100 per cent of the plan. It is, however, also necessary to mention the cost accounting system which takes care of the lower paid workers and learners. To sum up, the piece-rate system gives each worker exactly what he earns and is not used, as in capitalist countries, as a device to sweat the worker.

OUR FACTORY WALL PAPER AND NEWSPAPER

Like many other Soviet establishments we have a printed newspaper which appears every six days. It is not in the exact sense a "newspaper" as that word is understood. It gives very little news. On the other hand it severely criticizes and attacks everyone who is at fault. The fault may be slight, even tolerable. But our paper digs it up and hammers it. The sole intention of this is to correct the fault. Any worker can write to his heart's content in our paper. For criticism there is no space limit. The Soviet worker is a great kicker. When something is on his chest he gives it to the factory newspaper. The editor of our paper, who is also a worker in our factory and is sincerely interested in correcting faults, makes it his business to follow up

the fault. When it is corrected the paper will come out with some real praise for all those who helped to put the matter right. Our paper has a lynx eye on production and keeps our attention on it. If production improves or, say, the plate department produces over 100 per cent without much spoilage, the newspaper does not stint its praise and gives the department concerned all the credit.

However, the Soviet worker has so much on his chest about his factory of which he is part owner, and is so deeply concerned in production that he also writes his complaints to the wall newspaper or bulletin. Each department in our factory has a wall newspaper. Even the foreign workers and specialists have a wall newspaper to themselves. And everybody writes his or her frank criticism of persons and things and tries to correct faults.

Our international wall newspaper is a real polyglot, being partly in English, German, Italian, French and Jewish. The object of these wall newspapers is to keep us up to the mark, to expose mistakes, to illustrate some point or method in factory practice for the good of the factory and teaching the Soviet worker, to fight delinquency of every kind and especially of bureaucracy, by drawing attention to some neglected suggestion that the rationalization bureau does not care to bother about.

There is also a complaints book in our factory restaurant. This helps to keep our catering service efficient.

Persons responsible for a mistake do not like to see their names or departments pilloried in either the factory newspapers, wall bulletin or complaints book. These organs of publicity, together, help to make the factory atmosphere very wholesome.

FOREIGN WORKERS WANT TO HELP

At first, the thirty Americans employed in our factory were not drawn into this family affair of self-criticism or, indeed, made interested in writing for the general press about conditions in the factory and the progress we were making. This was largely the fault of the *Moscow News* for not getting into touch with them. The Americans were only too glad to do this when it



At a conference of the Metal Trades Brigade which draws English speaking workers and specialists into voluntary social work.

was put to them and the press was very pleased to get their remarks. We organized ourselves and sent constant reports of progress and criticism which were featured prominently. Many shortcomings and problems had gathered which it was necessary to air. The

Moscow News, printed in English, gave us a whole page. The printed factory paper did likewise. These expositions of the American workers' point of view had a very good effect on the entire administrative system of our factory. The printed word has great power and is of enormous value in socialist construction. The author of an article is never suppressed from writing whatsoever in his opinion he considers right. But, he must state concrete facts. The director was removed for not pushing the work along according to plan; a new man was set in his place who made the necessary changes which increased production and let us fulfil our plan more than 100 per cent. The press deserves credit for giving publicity to the problems and progress of this factory.

This was only possible through worker correspondents. I have contributed a good many articles myself and was instrumental in organizing the workers in our factory to write to the press. It is important that all foreign workers write to the press about their factories and their problems in the interest of socialist construction.

HOW THE KOLKHOZNIK GETS OUR WATCHES

Our old director was very pessimistic. He was satisfied when the factory produced as little as 40 per cent of our 1931 plan. He never insisted on a rise in production and he was removed.

The new director put some ginger into things and the whole administration woke up. The counter-plan of the foreign specialists was taken up, the main point of which was to concentrate on only two types of watches, a pocket watch and a wrist watch of the more popular

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The new director put some ginger into things and the whole administration woke up. The counter-plan of the foreign specialists was taken up, the main point of which was to concentrate on only two types of watches, a pocket watch and a wrist watch of the more popular

design. By this it was possible for us to produce 105 to 110 per cent of our plan.

Now we have a surplus of what is required from our factory under the plan. Our surplus of pocket watches we sell to our collective farmers.

Every factory is attached to some collective farm which supplies the factory worker with produce. Last year we got very little fruit or even vegetables. But now, having a surplus in our production, we are able to sell watches to collective farmers. And every morning we get fresh vegetables in abundance. When the new potatoes were not even seen in the general stores, workers in our factory got ten kilos each. Our special co-operative store is far better stocked with vegetables and fruit than it was a year ago.

This year there is a better organization of subbotniks or voluntary help to our kolkhoz. Every day a brigade volunteers to work at digging potatoes or vegetables after working hours. Our kolkhoz is only one hour away from our factory and if the brigade gets there at 5 p.m. there are still several hours of work it may do before dark.

I have been on several of these voluntary help expeditions. Digging potatoes, for instance. Did I enjoy it? Frankly, I didn't... at least, not afterwards. It's hard work and I, being a greenhorn at potato digging, entered into violent competition with a couple of young workers from our factory to see who could dig most. I beat them. But I came back half dead and I'll never forget how sore my bones were next day. If potato digging isn't a gift, it certainly is a thing a man has to get used to. On other occasions I've been out sorting potatoes in winter. It's a very unpleasant job, working up to your knees in dirt. But I did my best and made a good job of it. I regard these subbotniks

as imperative duties and not as personal sacrifice. I'm eager to help wherever I can. Socialist construction is the biggest job that was ever attempted in the history of the world. It wants all our hands ungrudgingly. And by the measure of our willing endeavour, whether at a subbotnik or in our daily work, it succeeds. Subbotniks, to the vast majority of people, and especially interesting subbotniks out in the open, are a matter of joy and high spirits. The greenhorns always come back sore and done up. It is because they put all their strength into it. The young ones make it a festival. It is a festival. Materially, apart from the value of the exercise, these subbotniks are good for us. The new cherries, apples and watermelons, which the Soviet worker likes so much, have made their appearance in our factory store earlier than in other co-operative stores. Our factory restaurant is able to prepare better meals for us. Our factory buffet is also better stocked. Candy, cider, jelly, various dishes of salad and natural honey can be had at very low prices because of the bond between us and our collective farm.

And all of this arises from the increase in our production. Nevertheless, we cannot say that we produce enough watches to meet the demand. Many times I have been asked why there are none of our watches on sale in the stores. Cultural education and the demand for accurate timekeepers are growing tremendously. We are expanding our factory, building an additional story to relieve the constant crowding due to our growth. But it will take many times more than the amount of watches our factory can produce to satisfy the wide home market in the Soviet Union.

FOREIGN WORKERS THERE—AND HERE

In America foreign workers are taken advantage of in every possible way by the government as well as by the bosses. They are given scornful names, "wops," "hunkey," and so on. They are paid the lowest wages. Even the law goes against a foreigner who is not a citizen of the United States of America. They eat the worst food and live in the slums. If they raise a protest they are maltreated, threatened with deportation and even deported. In the factories they are pitted against each other and driven to work harder. They are also warned not to join their trade union or to have anything to do with other workers' organizations.

Here, in the Soviet Union, the contrast is as between day and night. When a foreigner comes here to work, the Soviet workers consider him a citizen of the Soviet Union who is taking part in socialist construction. He is invited to join in the activities of the factory workers, to take part in meetings, to become a member of the trade union, to write to the wall newspaper, to submit suggestions for improvements or to criticize. He is accommodated with a room and furniture by the factory administration. He is attached to a food store like every other worker, according to the rationing scheme which ensures the just distribution of food and commodities. For this he is given a book which entitles him to buy the best food for less money than on the open market. The best clubs have foreign sections and entertainments are given in foreign languages. Even the radio has a foreign program in almost all languages.

Here, at a meeting, for instance, you can speak in any language. Even in government offices or peoples' courts you can speak English, as there is always an in-

terpreter to translate. Many Soviet citizens take up an extra foreign language, in most cases English or German. In fact it is surprising to hear so many people speaking English.

A foreign worker has all the legal rights of Soviet citizenship and automatically carries social insurance against accidents, sickness or death, if he works in a Soviet institution or factory. He even carries travelling insurance which is granted to anyone having a ticket while on a Soviet train, steamship or aeroplane.

Very much attention is paid to a foreign worker here. If he has any complaints to make he is given a prompt hearing. Then there is also a great deal of cultural work in which foreigners, with their families are invited to participate. Books, pamphlets and newspapers are being printed in most languages and factory newspapers print special pages in foreign languages. Foreign workers, specialists and visiting tourists are invited to write for these publications.

There is no prejudice or discrimination whatsoever against any foreigner.

The chauvinism which exists in America against Negroes is not known here. Some of the first Stalingrad Americans, indeed, were expelled from this country for endeavouring to continue such discrimination against Negroes working at Stalingrad.

In the Soviet Union a foreign worker of any race or nationality or colour, either man or woman, has the same rights as a Soviet citizen. This includes even the right to vote in the elections, the right being based on the fact that he or she is a worker in the state and therefore is entitled to select his or her representative. Implied in this is the right of the foreign worker to be elected to the city soviets and, as a matter of fact, to any government position if the workers vote

for him. Of course, it would be an exaggeration to claim that chauvinism, especially in the U.S.S.R. where there are so many different nationalities, has been entirely overcome in practice. But the basis for overcoming it is given, and a continuous struggle is waged against all signs of it.

I know many specialists here who have joined the Metal Trades Brigade and devote their spare hours to helping to build up the Soviet metal industry. They are an asset to Soviet industrialization and their experiences are most valuable. They assist the Soviet workers and train the youth, submitting practical suggestions and helping to carry them out. In the industrialization loans they were among the first to subscribe 100 per cent or more of their monthly salaries, issuing challenges to each other and setting a prime example in social consciousness. Many of these foreign specialists are getting along so well that they intend to settle permanently in the Soviet Union. They are not the kind of Americans who come here to make money and who, when everything doesn't go exactly to please them, break their contract and run home to raise a cry. They are honest proletarians who see the shining future and have come to give all the help they can to our mighty program. The fact that foreign workers receive not merely equal but in many respects better conditions than the Russian workers imposes on them corresponding duties. They have the duty of helping the Russian workers and of assisting the achievement of socialist construction.

MY INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

This is a great assistance to me and my fellow workers. My foreign correspondents send me much informa-

tion on the conditions of life and work abroad. Arising from this, much of my spare time is occupied in writing about our life and work in the Soviet Union. Here everything is so fundamentally different from what it is in capitalist countries. You cannot live here and see so many reasons for enthusiasm without wanting to sit down to tell the world about it, to tell how working conditions here are better than in any other country, how well the workers are taken care of in this workers' state, how, every day and in every way, things get better and better.

SOVIET CULTURAL LIFE

The cultural life which workers enjoy in the Soviet Union is remarkable. In our factory we have a club where we spend our time after work. Every evening motion pictures are shown there. A fine library and reading room is at our service. There is also a cafeteria, a room for games like chess and checkers and a spacious meeting hall. Here, classes are organized for foreign workers to learn Russian. There is a dramatic group which one may join and which gives performances quite frequently. There is also a choir and a class for learning to play musical instruments. Besides this club we have a large summer motion picture house. In the garden playground, sport activities are always in progress. There is an orchestra pavilion, a reading pavilion and a nursery for the children, in charge of trained nurses.

In the Soviet Union the children of workers are given special attention. The education they receive is such as only the children of rich people get in Europe and America. They grow up sturdy and robust, red checked

and plump. Their strong little bodies, brown from sun-bathing, are a picture to see in summer. They are given the best food in the land and are watched by the doctor and trained with tender care from the beginning.

To a foreigner their political wisdom is astonishing. I have heard a kid of ten or thereabouts discuss international politics with his father. Whenever I indulge in conversation with a Soviet youngster I find out how little I know politically. Many fifteen-year-olds have learned two languages. Some of those I know speak English excellently. I never saw such eager youngsters in their studies and I have yet to find one who has not the ambition to become a technical or construction engineer. They are being given every opportunity to gain knowledge and when they finish they are placed in positions in which they are most likely to succeed. I only wish I had had their chances when I was a boy.

MY LIVING CONDITIONS

When I came to work here the factory administration offered me a room. This is necessary, as Moscow and most other towns in the Soviet Union are very much overcrowded. Continually increasing numbers are employed in the cities and the new industrial towns which are springing up all over the Soviet Union. Consequently the housing problem is a big one in every town, despite the large numbers of new houses and blocks of flats which are being built at record speed to cope with the phenomenal demand.

However, I did not accept the room as I wasn't at first sure how long I'd stay. Besides, I did not wish to live isolated by myself. So I found living quarters with

a Russian family, which also made it possible for me to see how the Russians themselves live. I found out how, this family of four and one housemaid was getting along. They dressed like the average American worker, and they ate four times a day. They also made me eat four times a day. Many times, I went to the movies or took a walk in order to miss that fourth meal which was served at 10 p.m. I was only used to eating three times a day as in America, and I was not a heavy eater at that. Otherwise, the cooking was excellent and I liked their way of preparing the meals.

They had a four room apartment and ample space for me. Their rent was ten per cent of the man's wages which they paid the co-operative which built the house. Like all factory workers, they belong to the co-operative store of our factory and also to the co-operative building society where they live. Each member of the family has a food ration which is more than sufficient to keep the person well fed. For instance, each worker gets two pounds of bread a day at five kopeks a pound and the other food necessities are sold at low prices to workers through their closed co-operative stores. Clothes, shoes and the like are also rationed, each person in the family being entitled to sufficient clothes at special low prices.

Rationing of commodities which are temporarily insufficient to go round ensures that every worker gets his share of the necessities of life. This is a new country with a rising standard of living; a country which, in the face of world financial boycott, has had to establish and build up its own industries from the very bottom. Under the tsar, for instance, only a well-off peasant could have such a luxury as leather shoes. The shoe industry has had to be created from the bottom and it will take a little time before it is big enough

to turn out enough pairs for all the one hundred and sixty millions of people. It is the same with the new industries which produce other commodities, such as clothes, furniture and the like. These are all temporary shortages which are being overtaken at an unheard-of rate with the development of the resources of the country. No other country has ever had such a problem as this, to lift its whole people out of scarcity and deprivation, to supply its teeming millions with commodities they never had before and never hoped to possess in the old black days of the tsar. The second Five-Year Plan has laid down the task of a big increase in production of commodities for the "free" market and this is already bearing effect.

Nobody needs to save money for old age or sickness. Workers can spend all the money they earn, because they are assured of their pay, both now and in the future. There are, too, no doctors' bills to pay and no hospital bills to sap the family budget. No insurance bills. These social services are free to workers. Even the theatre and kino or concert tickets are given to workers at very reduced prices. Many concerts are free.

I paid only 150 rubles for my room and meals per month. But when the housemaid left them, I asked the administration of our factory to give me a room. This was eight months later and rooms were very scarce. There was very great difficulty in getting a room. But, after searching far and wide they found a room in a brand new five-storey house where I have since lived.

This is a modern one-room apartment. It is fitted with electricity, radio, steam heat, ventilation, wall closets, and has two big windows which give plenty of light. My room is 16 by 12 feet. The bath and toilet are separate. There is a kitchenette, sink and closet

for food and utensils. It is all nice and bright, cosy and comfortable. Since I realized the scarcity of rooms in Moscow, I appreciate this apartment much more than any other privileges a foreigner may get.

Moscow is not a city in which one can be lonely. Since I came to the Soviet Union I have not had one idle day or even an idle hour in which I felt at a loose end. There is so much to do, so much to see and learn, so much to keep all of your attention occupied, that I find time flying by quicker than ever in my life before. Apart from the time my international correspondence demands of me, even my nice "little" room sees little of me, save when I go home to bed.

MY LAST VACATION

The work I do does not take so much out of me that I should need a vacation. However, since you must take a vacation whether you need it or not I chose to rough it in the country and went to a real old Russian village. It was three hundred kilometres by train from Moscow and then thirty kilometres by horse-drawn wagon.

Before the revolution this village was the centre of a surrounding chain of smaller villages. Here lived the richest kulaks and middle peasants. The poorer peasants lived in the surrounding villages. The one small school was only sufficient for the children of the kulaks.

One of the richest churches in the vicinity can still be seen. They tell me that on religious holidays over three hundred people used to come to this church. But when, from curiosity, I went to church on the Sunday, there were only twenty-two people including the priest.

There were only two young women among them. All the other worshippers were very old.

Automobiles had never reached this village, but aeroplanes can be seen passing over it each day belonging to the passenger and mail line which flies that way. However, a main road for auto traffic is being built and eventually the auto will replace the horse-drawn wagon.

On the first anniversary of Lenin's death they opened an electric power house which lights the village by night and drives the flour mill by day. The telegraph and post office also serves as a postal bank. In place of the small school for little kulaks there are now two schools big enough to give all the children an opportunity of education. There is a large club with a buffet and a kino which is well patronized by the peasants from the surrounding villages. Wheat and flax are the main crops grown. The 1932 harvest, when I was there, was very good.

No American had ever set foot here before and I was the object of much interest to the country citizens. I had many talks with them and had to answer numerous questions about American farmers and their living conditions. Complain? Sure, they don't hesitate to complain. They told me of their difficulties. But they also assured me of their big advantages over the American working farmer. They knew and declared that the future belonged to them. Like the factory workers, when they spoke of the collective farm or the flour mill or wherever they worked, they said, "our" collective or "our" artel.

Instead of a sleepy backward village where the Soviet system was stagnant or did not penetrate, it was a place alive with certainty. The poor peasants were enthusiastic about the new way of living. Together with

the middle peasants they were all members of the collective farms and artels. The kulaks who so strongly resisted the Soviet system, were liquidated as a class.

One of the kulaks, Akinshinov, had thought that he could resist and even beat back the Soviet system. But he gave up completely and desperately. He was the richest man in this village. Besides the land and a number of houses, he had a general store which gave him many opportunities to take advantage of the poor peasant. There was no competition. The five years of the New Economic Policy strengthened him to a position where he openly defied the state. But as soon as Soviet stores were established right across the street, in 1929, he began to weaken. The idea that he had a competitor and that he could no longer skin the poor peasants to his heart's content, drove him to desperation. He tried to organize the kulaks in this vicinity. But all his counter-revolutionary efforts were of no avail. One by one the peasants deserted him and joined the collective farms or formed artels.

Even his children deserted him. His eldest son, plunging into the broad stream of the new life, left for Moscow, where he got a job as a construction worker and gave his hand to working on the Five-Year Plan. His daughters also threatened to leave home. Eventually, seeing that everybody, including his children, was deserting him, the unhappy exploiter finally chose the way of least resistance and hanged himself in one of his barns.

The local government officers are in the *Selsoviet* building, a brick house of which there are many in this village. Here works the district soviet, composed of delegates from the collective farms and artels. From this little building comes the wisdom and progress which has changed not only the face of this village but

also it heart. Here, through their delegates, the workers and peasants govern themselves, under the guidance of the great Communist Party, which has led the masses of this vast country through storm and stress to the mighty achievements which astonish the world. I emphasize this because it is in these backwoods, in an almost lost village like this, where you can see the new life springing vigorously out of the remnants and relics of the old, that the fact of the leadership of the Party seems to come home most strikingly. In the town with all the bustle and energy, with the new buildings and factories, the crowded trams and theatres, you are conscious that back of everything is the Communist leadership. But here that leadership seems nearer to the eye, you see it in a simpler, more intimate, quieter, but none the less determined form; you see it in the despair of the kulak Akinshinov, in the emptiness of that fine church, in the new schools, the collective farms and artels; you see it in the once oppressed peasants who formerly dared not whisper a complaint and who now openly criticize and fight with all their might to carry out the directives of the Party and of its great leader, Stalin, the Party which they know stands for them.

WE ARE BUILDING THE FUTURE

The present belongs to us workers. The laws here are our laws, made for us by ourselves through our own class representatives. That is why the Soviet citizen is the most law-abiding in the world. He observes the little rules and regulations as well as the big ones. He subjects himself to self-discipline as a matter of conscience in a way that the citizen of no other coun-

try does. On the other hand, the Soviet citizen is not afraid to protest when protest is warranted. He has inherited a fighting spirit from the days of the revolution and is ready to fight for everything. Indeed, in making this new world, he has to. He fights for improved living standards, for better distribution of food and clothing, for abolishing bureaucracy and red tape, for the carrying through of planned work, for the mastering of technique. His one long, big fight is for a classless society. But he does all this fighting in a disciplined way and with plenty of self-criticism. This self-criticism is of a kind hard to realize unless you live in this country and see it every day as I do. It is thorough and deep. It goes to the root of things, laying bare faults and shortcomings which block our progress. Self-criticism clears the path for advance. Absence of self-criticism, in fact, is one of the worst faults you can be guilty of, one which rightly meets with everybody's scorn. This aptitude for self-criticism is a quality which proves the fundamental soundness of our Soviet life, which assures us that the present is most truly ours, that we are building the future most surely. I have long since realized that self-criticism is one of our assets, a quality peculiar to us who live in this workers' land where nobody need pretend, where it behoves everybody to be straightforward, where everything is open and above-board, where, indeed, the new life and the new man are being created.

I, too, feel in myself fundamental changes. No honest worker here can avoid being caught up in the powerful stream of this new life. None of us can escape a measure of transformation. Your eyes are opened, old force of habit breaks down, you begin to think and see from new angles, to feel with new emotions. You look

to the future with definite assurance as to a certainty. You see your own future as a goal, positively, for the first time in your career. You become possessed of the same boundless hope as carries forward the millions of your fellow workers in this vast, rich fatherland.

THIS IS MY HOME

To sum up, what have I got by settling down in the Soviet Union? Primarily, health, which is priceless. Back in the States I suffered a good deal from stomach trouble. Eating black bread—the “black” bread which bourgeois ignoramuses make such a song about—has cured it. I was always pale and felt as weedy as I looked. Now I have a fine colour, I feel younger and am always full of pep. I thought at first that I would have to rough it. But can I say that it’s been rough? I have everything I need for my comfort in plenty: a fine room, good furniture, food that is pure and without any adulteration whatsoever. This is a big point—the purity of the food. You see, there’s no need to adulterate it, to mix it with cheap substitutes, because nobody has to skin a profit from it, as all the food manufacturers in capitalist countries must. This point also bears upon my improved health. It’s one of the reasons for it. Then there are the social amenities, club life, theatres, movies, concerts, lectures, classes, fine holiday places, rest homes, free hospital and doctors, etc., all these things at reasonable prices and whenever I want them. Can you call this a bad picture, can you say that it has anything in common with the anti-Soviet slanders so many of our enemies are free with? And all these conditions, mark you, are additional to the thrill of life here, the joy of making

and creating, the joy of all the fundamental differences which contrast with the grinding drive and uncertainty, the corruption and greed, the petty meanness, humbug and class distinctions which make life miserable even for relatively successful people in capitalist countries.

In America I belonged to my boss, but he never belonged to me. When he didn’t want me he flung me out. Here I belong to my comrade workers, as they belong to me. We’re a family running our own factory, running our own industries, running our own workers’ country. America is a land of bankruptcy where, in the face of starvation and colossal unemployment, they destroy food and other commodities. For the workers it is a land of sickness, oppression and death. Here we create and grow, industry rises, culture comes to flower.

We have our difficulties and recognize them. Only a fool would pretend that it is all beer and skittles. Things don’t always go smoothly. But then, that’s life and we are the builders—building in a way incredible to you who aren’t here to see—building freedom and prosperity, building socialism on the road to communism and the state without classes.

I have tried life in the Soviet Union for nearly three years and found it good. I have seen with my own eyes the tremendous things that can be done under workers’ rule. Here I have discovered the deep joy of a real purpose in life. This is now my home. Here, I intend to stay, a Soviet citizen, giving my best to building the glorious future which we see so clearly and have, in some respects, already begun to grasp.

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